

Maryland Public School Critical Life-Threatening Incident After-Action Summary Report

This report has been compiled in response to a life-threatening incident that occurred on public school grounds. It includes lessons learned and recommendations identified following a local review of the incident and aims to identify ways to improve the safety of Maryland public schools.

MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

Education Article § 7-1502(g)(21)

Education Article §7-1510(g)

COMAR 14.40.05.04

School Year: 2024-2025

Submitted: May 30, 2025

MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

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May 30, 2025

The Honorable Wes Moore
Governor
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable William C. Ferguson IV
President
Senate of Maryland
State House, H-107
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones
Speaker
House of Delegates
State House, H-101
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Critical Life Threatening Incident Report required by Education Article § 7-1502(g)(21) (MSAR #11851), Education Article §7-1510(g) (MSAR #11594), and COMAR § 14.40.05.04 (MSAR #15583).

Dear Governor Moore, President Ferguson, and Speaker Jones:

Pursuant to Education Article § 7-1502(g)(21), Education Article §7-1510(g), and State Government Article §2-1257, and COMAR § 14.40.05.04, the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) respectfully submits the following report, which contains identified lessons learned and school safety recommendations following a critical life-threatening incident on public school grounds.

If you have any questions about this report or would like additional information, please contact Joseph Dino Pignataro at joseph.pignataro@maryland.gov or 410-281-2335.

Sincerely,



Kate Bryan
Executive Director



Maryland Public School Critical Life-Threatening Incident After-Action Summary

On March 19, 2025 there was an incident within Washington County Public Schools (WCPS) that met the criteria to be considered a *Critical Life-Threatening Incident* pursuant to Md. Ed. Art. § 7-1510 (g) and COMAR 14.40.05.

Notification [COMAR 14.40.05.04A]

On March 19, 2025 the WCPS staff notified MCSS of the incident.

After-Action Meeting [COMAR 14.40.05.04B]

On March 27, 2025 an after-action meeting was held involving school representatives, law enforcement, and a representative from MCSS.

After-Action Report [COMAR 14.40.05.04C]

On April 17, 2025 WCPS submitted an after-action report to MCSS.

Lessons Learned

Based upon the after-action review led by WCPS, the following lessons learned were identified by individuals participating in the after-action meeting:

1. Regular Incident Command System (ICS)¹ training and tabletop exercises with schools, responders, and central office staff significantly contributed to the successful outcome of this incident. Specifically, the successful evacuation during lunchtime directly stemmed from prior training and the review of protocols for that specific scenario. This highlights that generic drills are not enough; schools need to anticipate and practice responses for various times of day and situations.
2. The effective establishment of a command location that evolved into a unified command, facilitating communication between school administration and first responders, was a direct result of ICS training and scenario-based tabletop

¹ ICS is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazard incident management concept. It provides a hierarchical, modular organizational structure for managing incidents of any size, scope, or complexity, regardless of jurisdiction or agency.

exercises. These proactive training measures and adaptive command structures are foundational for effective emergency response in any school environment.

3. School emergency plans should include detailed reunification procedures with assigned roles and responsibilities for every staff member. Additionally, schools should conduct regular reunification drills that simulate real-world conditions, including perimeter security assessments by both school and law enforcement personnel. These comprehensive drills are essential to identify and address any logistical challenges or communication gaps before an actual crisis occurs.
4. The integration of cameras into the statewide closed-circuit television (CCTV) program, MView,² allowed state and local authorized users immediate access to the schools' cameras to support response efforts. The use of MView significantly aided in the event additional first responder deployment became necessary. This underscores the benefit of leveraging technology for situational awareness.

School Safety Recommendations

1. Schools across the state should consider integrating their school camera systems with MVIEW, which ensures data privacy and security, to allow state and local responders situational awareness during emergencies. This proactive step can significantly reduce response times and provide critical intelligence when every second counts. Such integration also enables more informed tactical decisions, ultimately enhancing the safety of students and staff.
2. To prevent critical delays during emergencies, school systems must prioritize and invest in redundant and resilient technological support for accessing vital student information. In a crisis, access to critical data like student medical information, emergency contacts, and reunification details is paramount. Relying solely on standard networked systems or staff's personal device battery life can be a critical failure point. This incident underscores the necessity of redundant and resilient technological support in emergency situations. Without immediate access to this information, effective decision-making and swift action can be severely hampered.

² MView provides live CCTV camera feeds from multiple organizations in MD, DC, VA, NJ, and PA to authorized users. Users are granted access to specific groups of camera feeds from various organizations based on their role and area of jurisdiction. MView accounts are available only to first responders, law enforcement, emergency management, public safety personnel, and other government officials.